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SERIES STARTS IN SCANDINAVIA



DEAN WILSON

BACK ON TRACK AND LIVING THE AMERICAN DREAM

JACK BURNICLE

THE LIFE, LOVES AND LEGENDARY CAREER OF THE MAN BEHIND THE MIC



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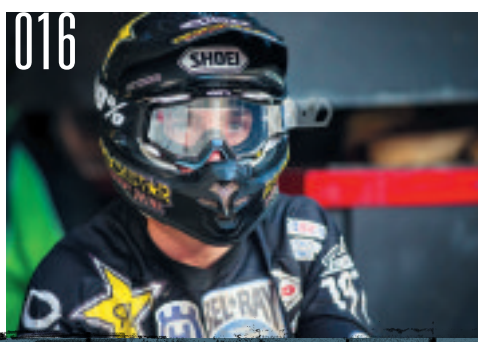
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BRAVE



THE HEART!

THE MOST SUCCESSFUL BRITISH RIDER TO COMPETE IN AMA SUPERCROSS OR MOTOCROSS SINCE FELLOW SCOT JEFF WARD, GLASGOW-BORN DEAN WILSON HAS FOUGHT BACK FROM A SUCCESSION OF INJURIES TO MIX IT WITH THE BEST INDOOR RACERS ON THE PLANET...

Words by Sean Lawless

Dean Wilson has got a crazy accent. Part American, part Canadian but still mostly Scottish, it's like a spoken map of the journey his life has taken him on.

Born in Glasgow, he moved first to Canada and then the USA where he's established himself as one of the world's top racers and the most successful Brit to ever compete in AMA motocross and supercross.

A two-time Monster Energy Supercross 250cc runner-up and the 2011 Lucas Oil Pro Motocross 250cc champion, the 25-year-old current sits 10th in the 450SX standings after starting the season as a privateer before picking up a ride – indoors and out – with the Rockstar Husqvarna team.

He divides his time between bases in California and Florida where he's currently living, just down the road from Ken Roczen and not far from the famous Baker's Factory where Ryan Dungey, Marvin Musquin and Jason Anderson train.

Racing in the States is a goal shared by young riders across the world and, on paper at least, it looks like Dean's living the dream. But the truth is that while his CV is pretty impressive, a string of injuries have seen him complete just two full seasons since he turned pro in 2010.

He moved to Canada when he was nine but had already started riding after his father, an ex-racer, introduced him to motocross.

"I raced 50s and 60s in Scotland before we went at places like Leuchars, Drumclog, Dunblane and a few other tracks," he says. "I wasn't very good at all to be honest. I was barely top 10 but it was more of a hobby back then. I was nothing spectacular.

"We moved to Canada because my family owned a kitchen and cabinet home improvement business and

the business was getting really stressful and they had to have a change. My dad had some of his family who are from Scotland living in Canada so we moved there."

Dean continued to compete in Canada but it wasn't until his family began to head south in winter to escape the harsh weather that his racing began to take on more importance.

"How I think I got more of a better rider was it was so cold in the winters we'd go down to California. It started off as three weeks as a holiday and we rode a little bit and every year it seems like we stayed longer so the next time it was six weeks, then three months and the racing was getting more serious. That's kind of how it all happened."

Back then Pro Circuit Kawasaki was the 250cc team everyone wanted to ride for and Dean was no exception as he prepared to leave the amateur ranks.

"My most successful year [as an amateur] was my very last year. That was a year I knew I had to make something happen if I wanted to be on a good team. It wasn't like it is now where kids are getting picked up for professional teams when they're on 60s and 80s.

"I didn't sign with Mitch Payton until November 2009 so he really had me waiting. I had a few offers from a few different teams but I wanted to ride for Mitch – it was always a dream of mine and I finally made it which was amazing."

It was a successful rookie year for Dean racing the East Coast SX Lites championship with podiums in Daytona and St Louis but visa problems forced him to miss a couple of rounds which dropped him to sixth and cost him an almost certain third. Outdoors it was even better with overall wins at Budds Creek and Pala netting him fourth at the end of the season, just nine points away from second.

Heading into his second year as a pro, Dean was full >>



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HARRI KULLAS

THE IRONMAN

Finishing two motos was too much for some riders at Culham but MVR-D Husqvarna's Harri Kullas managed to make it to the chequered flag in three after starting all four championship motos. The 25-year-old Finn ran 2-8 for second overall in MX2 and DNF-4 in MX1 to secure 13th in that championship chase. With only a few minutes between the end of the MX2 motos and the start of the MX1 ones Harri had to literally run back to the MVR-D team truck, change kit, grab a drink and then head back to the line for another punishing 25-minute plus two lap moto. What a hero!

WET N' WILD!

THE MAXXIS SERIES KICKS OFF AT CULHAM WHERE OVERNIGHT RAIN LEAVES CONDITIONS A LITTLE ON THE DAMP SIDE...

The start of a new season is an exciting time what with all the riders sporting their new colours and that. So imagine our disappointment when overnight rain left the Culham circuit somewhat squelchy and meant that around 90 per cent of the field powered out of turn one looking like the Monster from the Black Lagoon. It certainly made picking out racers – from the front at least – pretty damn difficult.

Good starts were helpful – although not essential – if riders wanted to put big points on their early season scorecards. Get mired in the midpack and the motos were long, hard, drawn-out affairs with everyone struggling for vision as well as track position. Get away with the leaders though and it was a very different story which meant there were some surprising results at the end of the day.

With no former champions lining up in MX2 this year we're definitely gonna be crowning a new winner in 2017. With a couple of GPs under his belt already this season Ben Watson opened his account with a seemingly easy double victory over the race rusty locals who'd not had chance to line up at a high profile event since the Hawkstone International at the beginning of February! And to be fair only a handful of Maxxis riders entered that one anyway...

For many 'contenders' this was their first big race of the year and that fact along with the uber-tough conditions delivered a topsy-turvy set of results. At the end of the day it was Watson, Harri Kullas and Brad Todd who stood on the podium – a total whitewash in the 250F class for riders on Austrian-built machinery.

As the only MXGP rider able to take on the full Maxxis tour this year (Tommy Searle planned to but injury screwed that one for him) Jake Nicholls had a similar advantage over his competition to Watson and funnily enough his results were exactly the same. At the end of it all Jake was flanked on the podium by Graeme Irwin and Steven Lenoir although that doesn't come close to telling the full story. So sit back and let us fill you in...

SUPER



RMEN!

THE SUPERHEROES OF THE SUPERENDURO WORLD CHAMPIONSHIP BATTLE IT OUT AROUND THE GLOBE...

Words and photos by Future7Media

As racing goes the FIM SuperEnduro World Championship is about as action packed as it gets. Negotiating an indoor track rammed with every manner and mean of obstacle is difficult enough but when you try squeezing another 13 riders on to the 40-second lap at the same time then, well, things generally get wild.

This year's SuperEnduro series once again delivered chaos, carnage and great racing in spades. For four rounds in Poland, Germany, Spain and France, some of the best indoor racers in the world went at it hammer and tongs for six minutes three times a night. And after 18 races it was Husqvarna's Colton Haaker who claimed a second consecutive world crown while South Africa's Blake Gutzeit (Yamaha) bagged his first world title in the Junior category.

As defending champion Haaker carried the weight of the #1 plate on his shoulders. Despite a shorter series than the 2016 championship he won, that weight of expectation certainly made it feel just as long.

Arriving to Europe and round one in Poland off the back of a debut AMA EnduroCross Championship, Haaker certainly had momentum on his side when the start gate dropped in Krakow. But one thing he hadn't got was the support of 15,000 seater stadium behind him. That privilege went to Taddy Blazusiak and the KTM rider fed off it in a race that would become his swan song.

Signing off from professional competition in the best possible way, Blazusiak was given a standing ovation as he put his KTM on the top step of the podium for what would be the very last time. With Haaker second best, Alfredo Gomez carded arguably the second best ride of the night, considering he was a late addition to the entry list having literally stepped of a plane from the Roof of Africa to compete.

With Blazusiak bowing out, the fight for championship honours was left to play out between Haaker, Gomez and Jonny Walker with the trio holding an extra edge over >>

SIR JACK! PART 2

IN THE SECOND PART OF OUR SPECIAL JACK BURNICLE FEATURE WE CATCH UP WITH THE KING OF COMMENTARY AFTER HIS FIRST TASTE OF CONTINENTAL GP ACTION HAD SOWN A SEED THAT WOULD GROW FOR THE NEXT TWO DECADES...

Words by **Sean Lawless**

When we left Jack last month he'd just returned from his first continental race – the 1976 French 125 GP at Cassel – with a ton of great memories and a Pernod hangover.

Little did he know at the time but it was the beginning of an adventure that would stretch out over the best part of the next two decades – that's foreign GPs, not getting sideways on aniseed-favoured booze.

It's an often trotted-out cliché that 'life's a journey, not a destination' and Jack embodied this through a series of epic road trips riding shotgun with some of the biggest names in British racing of the '70s and '80s.

"You'd get so used to travelling back through the night on a Sunday because those guys thought nothing about racing a grand prix and then driving back," he remembers. "There were some wonderful people who looked after me over the years and took me abroad.

"I couldn't have done it without Roger Harvey and Rob Hooper and Dave Watson and Willie Simpson and Pete Mathia and Stephen Russell and Jim Lewis and even Kurt Nicoll and Aaron on one occasion. People who'd meet you down at Dover at the East Docks or, in Willie and Roger's case, pick me up at my place in North London. That's what made it all accessible for me for the peanuts I was getting paid to actually do it."

Remember, when he first started travelling to foreign GPs Jack was earning his living as part of London's mainstream media circus. His weekends abroad were completely separate from his life during the week and the payslips he earned from motocross were initially meagre.

"The second grand prix I went to – with Hoop and his dad, the wonderful late Bob Hooper – was the Dutch 250 GP at Lichtenvoorde. I'd said to Motorcycle News 'could I have a byline this time?' and they put this huge box in the middle of the page saying 'report and pictures by Jack Burnicle'!

"TMX started in '77 and I started working for them in '78. Roger did 125 GPs in '76, '77 and '78 and in '78 I went to a lot of the 125 GPs because it was an epic season involving Rahier, Rond and Watanabe. TMX carried a regular column by Gaston Rahier's mechanic and my photographs illustrated it."

As well as shooting roll after roll of film – "my beloved Tri-X" – Jack was writing more and more and his love of language combined with the descriptive powers that make him so popular behind a microphone today manifested themselves in his early articles.

"I was going to some 250 GPs as well and I started writing stories [for TMX] but they were long stories – they used to have to continue them on the back page because the reports were so long.

>>



Ride
Ride

ALTERED BEAST!

DBR
TESTED

**DAN CHUCKS A STACK OF PARTS
AT THE EXC-F BEFORE CHUCKING
HIMSELF AT A STACK OF TREES...**

Words by Dan Grove Photos by Dan Grove and Matt Dean

Since signing off last month I've made a fair few additions to the long-term KTM 350 EXC-F. The eagle-eyed amongst you may have spotted the full Akrapovic exhaust system that I've been running for around two months now. The stock system is okay and does the job fine although it is quite restricted. You don't really notice this until you change the exhaust though.

The Akrapovic system really allows the motor to breathe and throttle response is much improved over the stock unit. Performance wise it has livened up the mid-range and I am now able to hold onto each gear a little longer on faster sections.

The fitment couldn't be better. All of the components of the system fit perfectly and all of the bolt holes lined up in the right place – there was no need to pull up the end of the silencer to get a bolt in for example which is something that I've done in the past – which is what you'd expect from a high-end exhaust manufacturer.

I didn't actually weigh the tow systems but the Akrapovic is noticeably lighter so if you're looking to shed some weight on your bike

then this is a good way to do so.

On tickover the sound isn't that different however when I rev the bike up it has a much crisper note to it and this is very much the same when riding. The throttle response is drastically improved and if you combine this exhaust with Map Setting 2 you pretty much have a motocross style powerband which is ideal for some less technical sections of your ride. This exhaust can be found in the KTM Powerparts catalogue, part number 792.05.901.044.

Speaking of the map switch, I ended up changing the location on the bars for it so that it was next to the grip. Previously it was located right next to the bend in the bar so it meant that I had to take my hand completely off the grip to select a different map or activate the traction control feature.

Being able to change the setting without even looking down, is really handy on rides where you need to change it in a hurry – when entering a tight, rooty, muddy section after a fire road blast for example.

The main reason for moving the switch was for ease of use but I'd also received a shipment of hard parts from Renthal including handlebars and grips so when



they came through I moved it all around at the same time. I opted for my preferred 'Yamaha' bend in the FatBar as with some low branches or fallen trees that I'd been riding under it meant I get a bit of extra clearance for my head.

I paired up the bars with my favourite grips of all time – and I'm not just saying this because they were supplied – which are Renthal's dual compound tapered half waffle grips. They're thicker on the inner end of the grip which I find gives me a much nicer feel than a completely flat grip. They last for ages as well. Last year I put about five months on a set...

Thanks to the streams that I'd been riding in the brake pads, chain and sprockets had taken a bit of a hammering so Renthal also supplied some front and rear pads as well a chain and sprocket kit which was much needed.

I'd used Renthal brake pads in the past with great results however this was my first time using one of their TwinRing rear sprockets and R3 works chain. The sprocket must have some very durable anodising as my next ride out was in some heavy, sandy going. I'd forgotten to take a photo of it prior to riding and after cleaning the bike I was amazed to see it still being the same gleaming orange colour that it was when it was installed. I was >>

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FRONT

WHEN THE ENDUROGP SERIES KICKS OFF IN WINTRY FINLAND, THE FEARLESS OFF-ROAD ELITE ARE FACED WITH CHALLENGES OLD AND NEW...

Words and photos by **Future7Media**

Arguably the most talked about Enduro World Championship season opener since the last time the FIM's flagship enduro series got underway in Scandinavia, the first round of the 2017 EnduroGP series which was held in Finland might not have had the snow many were expecting but it saw the flag drop on what's expected to be another stellar season of woods racing.

The inclusion of the classic Finnish event was a controversial one from the first moment it was proposed. Breaking away from the 'traditional' format, anyone looking for a decent result at the one-lap, winter event certainly needed to do their homework.

Unsurprisingly, it was the Finns, or more specifically Finnish dynamo Eero Remes, who stole the show by finishing each of the two days as the overall fastest rider. Flanked by a gaggle of his countrymen, the TM rider stamped his authority on the event in no uncertain terms.

Finland might have been a little less snowy that expected but it was nevertheless a huge challenge for the riders and teams that headed north. For most the event came after one, or in some cases two, pre-event trips to Finland in order to dial-in and get accustomed to the very specialist conditions. For many it was an event that took them well outside of their comfort zone. |



ZEN!





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